

NSC BRIEFING

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30 November 1955

MOUNTING VIOLENCE ON CYPRUS

- I. Violence increased in range and intensity on Cyprus in last 2 weeks.
 - A. Nationalist extremists apparently have decided upon guerilla warfare against the British.
 - B. Have ambushed British military patrols; attacked military posts and military vehicles; at least 5 British soldiers have been killed and many more wounded.
 - C. Nationalist terrorist organizations EOKA appears well-organized and trained.
 1. EOKA probably has a couple of hundred active operatives but unlimited reserves among 410,000 ethnic Greeks.

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- D. Intensified violence stems from recent developments:
 1. Refusal on 14 November of Cyprus Supreme Court to review death sentence passed on Cypriot convicted of killing British soldier;
 2. Declaration on 26 November of state of emergency;
 3. Press reports of new British proposal repeating offer of immediate self-government and including assurance that Britain will discuss future of island with Cypriot representatives when self-government has proved workable and strategic requirements permit.

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11. Nationalists apparently expect continued violence will force British concession on self-determination.

A. Spreading terrorism and increasingly severe British repression appear probable.

1. Assassination attempts against top British officials and increasing clashes between terrorist bands and British units likely.

2. British attitude illustrated by bombing incident 26 November. Bomb thrown into ballroom of Ledra Palace Hotel during St. Andrew's Day celebration broke a water main, flooding ballroom floor, and knocked out electric power. British stood in darkness in ankle-deep water and sang "God Save the Queen" before adjourning to another room.

B. Only incident involving US personnel thus far was on 24 November, when bomb thrown at pickup truck driven by American. No damage, and driver gained impression from "demonstrators" to whom he protested that he had been mistaken for a Britisher.

1. Nonetheless US vehicles kept off roads at night and personnel remain indoors. Duty periods in US installations from 4:00 P.M. to 8:00 A.M. covered by single men who eat and sleep at stations. Officials estimate some deterioration of service.

2. No indication as yet that US personnel will be attacked by terrorists, though possibility of accidental involvement worries American civilians and dependents.

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